

Ashley Community Forest Board Meeting

**Special Meeting, Thursday 4/14/22, 6:00 p.m.
Justin Morrill Education Center, Strafford**

Present Erik Skarsten (ES), Rob Stainton (RS), Annie Penfield (AP), David Paganelli (DP), Michael Sacca (MS)

6:10pm Meeting called to order

MS presented the board with one of two large scale maps of the Ashley Community Forest, informal discussion regarding boundaries, trails, terrain and forestry resources while viewing the map ensued.

Officers were elected

AP made the motion to elect DP as chair, seconded by MS, vote was unanimous

AP offered to be treasurer, DP made the motion to elect AP as treasurer, MS seconded, vote was unanimous

It was decided that the secretary position would be rotated among the three remaining members, starting with MS.

History of ACF

MS gave a brief history of how AVC purchased the parcel and why through a timeline of events.

DP guided the explanation and discussion regarding key documents relating to the ACF:

- Conservation Easement
- Interlocal Agreement
- Forestry Plan
- Interim Management Plan

AP gave her take regarding the Interlocal Agreement, and David explained details about the Forestry Plan. DP said that the parts relating to recreation, aesthetics, wildlife habitat and wetlands should be expanded. He also noted that at present the plan lacks an education section which will be added.

DP proposed that the management and forestry plans, which are guiding documents for the ACF, be combined into a Stewardship Plan that would be a comprehensive plan including recreation, wildlife, forestry, public use, ecological matters including plant, animal and wetlands inventories which would be reviewed every 5 years. Other areas to be addressed in the plan will be parking, trail development, signage and education. Education may include the creation of viewing platform(s), plant studies, cultural studies.

It was proposed to re-work the plan in segments, synthesize ideas and put on paper in brief passage of about a page each. ES suggested that community members could be pulled into the process and help with various sections, perhaps by making a call on the lists and town websites. Groups would run simultaneously and come up with drafts of the sections, to be presented to the public at a later date.

DP suggested 3 steps:

- experts/volunteers/board members flesh out ideas as an initial draft,
- have public meetings to present the initial draft and seek additional input,
- prepare a final draft of the stewardship plan based on the initial draft and public input.

Education will be an early effort with ES, RS, MS drafting. Other early topics will include wildlife, recreation (AP will lead?), ecology, landowner relations, (AP and MS).

Judith Falk has put forth a proposal to create a Friends of ACF group to support the board. She wrote "I envision a group that would function in a support role for the Ashley Board--taking on such tasks as setting up and coordinating workshops, fundraising, listserv postings, helping with trail maintenance, drawing on our connections to find other volunteers to help with tasks, etc. It would be made up of several tiers of volunteers, with a core group who would then draw on other volunteers and community resources as needed to do whatever needs doing."

The board agrees that the Friends group would be of great help to ACF.

The board decided to meet every two weeks in order to get work underway. The next meeting will take place on April 28, 6pm at The Sharon Academy. A special meeting will take place on May 19th. *(Why is this a special meeting? -MS) Answer: A special meeting is not a regularly scheduled meeting. If we always meet on the 4th Thursday of each month, those are warned as Regular Meetings. If we have an extra meeting somewhere along the way, that is a Special Meeting. If there is some crisis, and we call a meeting on short notice, that is an Emergency Meeting.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm